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T. H. HOSKINS, M. D., Editor.

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THE HAY PANIC.

The following appears in several journals without credit. It was original, probably, in a Portland paper. It will apply in our State:

The efforts being made by interested parties to keep up and raise the price of hay by cries of short crop and consequent scarcity of winter fodder for cattle is most senseless and wicked. It is true that the hay crop of Maine the present year will be diminished from last year, but the percentage is not so great as has been represented. We have taken some pains to ascertain the precise condition of the crop in this vicinity and in some parts of the State, by conversation with farmers and others practically acquainted with the facts: and the result of our inquiries is, on well kept land the decrease is from 10 to 20 per cent., while in a few instances have the figures reached so low as 50 per cent., and then on old, worn-out land with thin soil. We estimate, therefore, that the hay crop of Maine for the year 1871 will not fall off from last year's product more than 25 per cent.

But admitting the truth of the alarmists' predictions, there is no reason for an exorbitant price. The law of compensation applies here in the abundance and cheapness of corn, fifteen bushels which can be bought for $12, with a ton of hay, is fully equal for stock to two tons of herds-grass. At the present high cost of hay in this market ($33) the use of corn practically reduces the price of food to $22.50 per ton. The corn crop of the West is unfailing, and there is no prospect that the price at the East will advance; but on the contrary, it is likely to drop. Our advice to farmers is to feed more corn and winter the young stock, which is sometimes sold in the fall through necessity, when it is not fit for beef, and the loss of which on the farm is a source of poverty to the land and to the owner.

HIGH FARMING.

High farming is not set about properly. I don't consider the erection of costly barns and putting into them thousands of dollars' worth of machinery, steaming apparatus, &c., as any proof of high farming; but when surrounded by land which will not grow fourfold the crops of the common farms around, it is a clear case of high folly, and this kind of outlay may do more harm than good, for when gentlemen farmers, who expend thousands on thousands on buildings and machinery, have been witholding a few hundreds of dollars' worth of manure or a few tons of oil-cake to fatten the cattle, and through the manure from these cattle feed the land, the common farmers laugh at the exhibition of fine barns; and when after a while the growing such inferior food as bad management produces, and the steaming of it to make it palatable, has brought about the inevitable result of a sickening in the proprietor for agriculture, and the property is offered for sale, then the whole body of land suckers, the whole race of those who grow half crops, and sell any way to make money to struggle on with, chime in with one united chorus, "I told you so. These fancy farms wont pay!"

High farming is also good farming. It leads, as a matter of course, to an extension of homesteads, because high and good farming produces such immense crops that more cattle have to be accommodated, and more room for everything has to be provided; but the necessary machinery for securing the crops is so good that they are all harvested so well as to need no cooking, and those who farm high have too much good judgment to cut hay with woody stems, instead of grass full of starch and sap, which would fatten a beast in its natural state. In a few years grass will be cut when it will make good hay; roots will be grown more, and machinery will be used more generally than at present, but the good and high farmers will take more pride in showing fat cattle and sheep, than in talking of the turning of inferior hay and fodder into eatable stuff by cooking, and the hay farmer will exhibit his hundred acres of heavily manured grass as evidence of his coming crops, instead of talking of aftermath rotting on the surface. Fat cattle that have room for three barrels of flour to lie on their backs, and meadows with twenty tons of good fat dung spread on to the acre, are much better evidence of high farming than high sounding talk.—*Cor. Country Gentleman.*

EXHAUSTIVE SYSTEM OF AGRICULTURE.

Johnston, in his "Chemistry of Common Life," gives the following graphic description of the system of farming commonly adopted by the first settlers on this continent:

Man exercises an influence on the soil, which is worthy of attentive study. He lands in a new country, and fertility everywhere surrounds him. The herbage waves thick and high, and the massive trees sway their proud stems loftily towards the sky. He clears a farm from the wilderness, and ample returns of corn repay him for his simple labor. He plows, he reaps, and from her seemingly exhaustless bosom the earth gives back abundant harvest. But at length a change appears, creeping slowly over and gradually dimming the smiling landscape. The corn is first less beautiful, then less abundant, and at last it appears to die altogether beneath the scourge of an unknown insect or a parasitic fungus. He forsakes, therefore, his long cultivated farm, and hews out another from the native forest. But the same early plenty is followed by the same vexatious disasters. His neighbors partake of the same experience. They advance like a devouring tide against the verdant woods, they trample them beneath their advancing culture, the axe leaves its yearly prey, and generation after generation proceeds in the same direction—a wall of green forests on the horizon before them, a half-desert and naked region behind. Such is the history of colonial culture in our own epoch; such is the vegetable history of the march of European cultivation over the entire continent of America. No matter what the geological origin of the soil may be or what its chemical composition; no matter how warmth and moisture may favor it, or what the staple crop it has patiently yielded from year to year, the same inevitable fate overtakes it. The influence of long-continued human action overcomes the tendencies of all natural causes. But the influence of man upon the productions of the soil is exhibited in other and more satisfactory results. The improver takes the place of the exhauster, and follows his footsteps on these same altered lands. Over the sands and forsaken tracts of Virginia and the Carolinas, he spreads large applications of shelly marl, and the herbage soon covers it again, and profitable crops; or he strews on it a thinner sowing of gypsum, and as if by magic, the yield of previous years is doubled or quadrupled; or he gathers the droppings of his cattle and the fermented produce of his farm-yard, and lays it upon his fields, when lo! the wheat comes up luxuriantly again, and the midge and the rust and the yellows all disappear from his wheat, his cotton, and his peach-trees. But the renovator marches much slower than the exhauster. His materials are collected at the expense of both time and money, and barrenness ensues from the easy labors of the one, far more rapidly than green herbage can be made to cover it again by the most skillful, zealous, and assiduous labors of the other.

WEEDS.

Weeds, of all vegetables, are remarkable for their productiveness. Not only do they yield seed "after their kind," but many of them have appliances for distribution. Some have downy wings by means of which they are able to rise high in the air, cross considerable bodies of water, and thus betake themselves to "fresh fields and pastures new." Not that they have need to do this in order to keep the stock from deteriorating, for, unlike useful plants, the hundredth crop grown on the same piece of ground is apparently as good as was the first. They do not require virgin soil, a rotation, imported or chemical manures, that they may grow and luxuriate. Others are equipped with little hooks that are easily attached to anything that comes in contact with them. Some are fashioned with coverings that answer the purpose of a boat for crossing water, and which afford a ready means of passing over smooth ground. Few of them need any protection in order to germinate. Most of them retain their vitality after repeated freezings and thawings, dryings and soakings. Many will pass through the digestive organs of animals and have their vitality quickened rather than impaired.

It would seem as if farmers in view of such pests would be vigilant in season and out of season in order to extirpate them. But as a rule little more is attempted than to keep them in check between the hills of cultivated crops. It is known, that if left alone they would well nigh prevent the growth of corn, potatoes, beans, vines and garden vegetables; so the cultivator, plow, and sometimes, as in the garden, the hoe is used to keep them down. But as soon as these crops are sufficiently advanced to insure a fair return, weeds are suffered to grow as though they were not sapping the soil of its productiveness, and as if they were not maturing seeds enough on every rod of land to render an acre foul. On most farms there is absolutely no time spent, and no pains taken, for the avowed purpose of killing weeds. Most farm hands would express a good deal of surprise if the owner of the farm should say to them on Monday morning, this week we are to spend in killing weeds.

To see the strip of weeds that surrounds many grain fields, a stranger would be inclined to think that it was an important adjunct to successful grain raising, and quite as necessary to maturing a crop of grain as a wind break of evergreens is to protect an orchard of tender trees growing in an exposed situation. It would be an easy matter to cut them down before the seeds have matured, and comparatively easy to mow and burn them later in the season, but this would be wasting time in destroying weeds. There would be no ready money in this sort of work. It seems to be expected that weeds are to grow unmolested on the side of the road; and in riding in many sections of the country one would get the impression that farmers thought the space between the turnpike and the fence was set apart for the express purpose of raising thistles, burdocks, mullen stalks, and other gigantic species of noxious weeds. On many farms there are well prepared and nicely located nurseries of weeds. Among the spots set apart for this purpose are the places where manure has been heaped up before it is drawn on the fields. Often there is a place appropriated to raising choice seeds of weeds on one side of the barn, in so convenient reach of the garden that a large part of the seeds produced will readily find their way there.

The strategies of love and war seem to require about equal genius. A young man at Gilman, Ill., lately resolved to carry off his betrothed by stealth because he couldn't do it openly, and proceeded to her house at night with a muffled vehicle, while an accomplice, dashed up with a heavy one. The girl was lowered into the lighter buggy, at which time her father became aware that something was wrong, and rushed off in pursuit of the thunderer, while the happy pair went quietly the other way, and were married.